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PREFACE

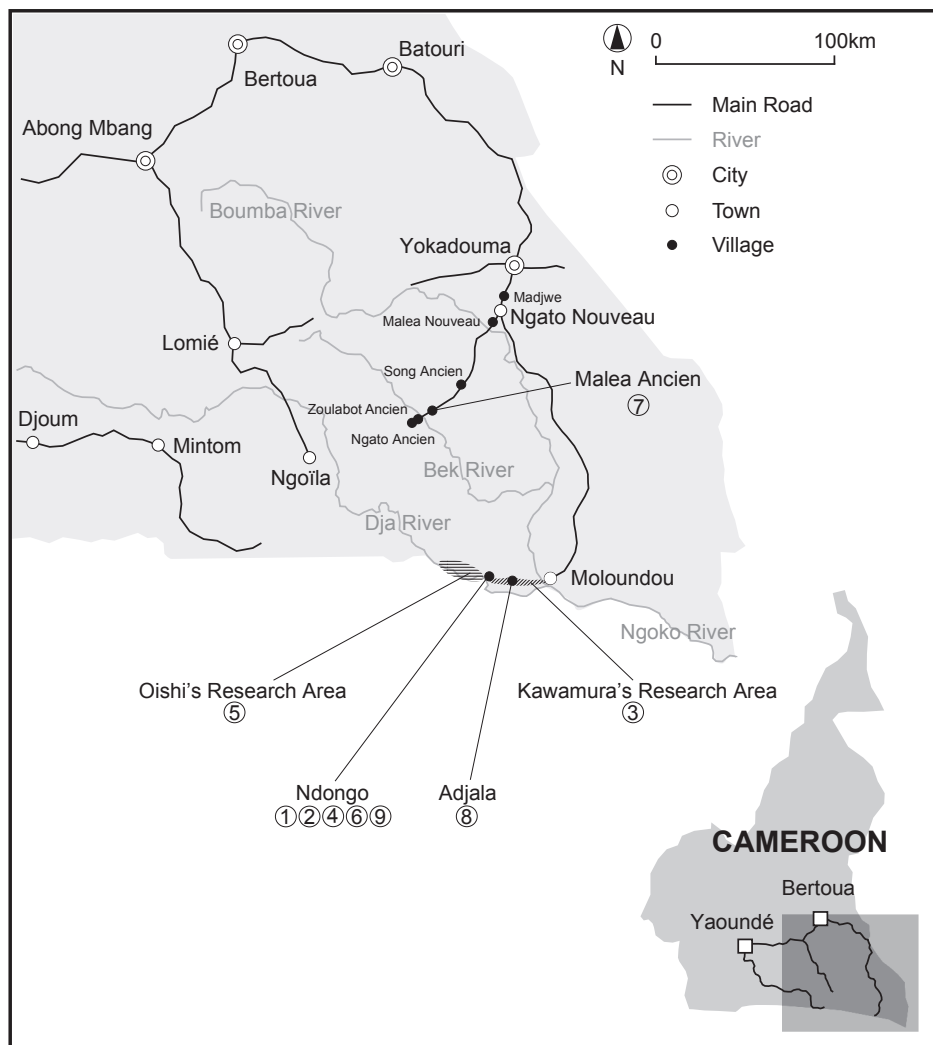
Baka Pygmies are one of several Pygmy groups living as hunter-gatherers in the African tropical rainforest. Their habitation territory covers the forested areas of the western Congo Basin. Japanese anthropological studies of the Baka Pygmy started in the Republic of Congo (Congo-Brazzaville) in 1987 and have continued in Cameroon to the present since 1993. During the last quarter-century many broad researchers from Japanese Universities, in particular, Kyoto University, Kobe-Gakuin University, Hamamatsu University School of Medicine, and Hokkaido University, have engaged in field surveys and have produced a wealth of diverse results.

This special volume of African Study Monographs focuses on the socio-ecological adaptations of Baka Pygmies who reside in the Boumba-Ngoko Department of the East Region of southeastern Cameroon. The research sites in this volume are shown on the map on the next page. Part I discusses the biological adaptation of forest dwellers, including 4 articles on a foraging lifestyle in a tropical rainforest, nutritional status and physical fitness, blood pressures and lifestyle, and demography and nutritional status of Baka, and an article on dietary life of Bakwele farmers living in the same areas as the Baka. Part II discusses the social relationships of intra-ethnic and inter-ethnic groups, including 4 articles on everyday conversation, smoking and drinking behavior, and acculturation and ethnic relationship with farmers of the Baka, and witchcraft of the Baka and farmers.

Although the African Pygmies have been known as hunter-gatherers in the African tropical rainforest, we cannot yet prove so. The studies on the behavior, knowledge, and physical characteristics of Baka Pygmies depending on forests for much of their life could contribute greatly to understanding the above issues. Many researchers have paid attention to the social relationships between Pygmies and farmers for a long time. However, those relationships will certainly undergo possibly significant change as globalization advances. Some studies in this volume can vividly reveal the current realities and provide a baseline for future studies. So far, the social relationships of intra-Pygmy group were of little interest to many researchers, except for marital relation. The studies in this volume offer valuable data to advance the sociological studies of African Pygmies.

Hiroaki SATO

MAP OF THE RESEARCH AREAS IN THIS VOLUME



* Each number on the map shows the chapter number in this volume.